

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SSM-03 ACDA-07
/069 W

-----130051 221036Z /15

O 220958Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4949
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 4102

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINR, LE, PDEV, MARR
SUBJECT: MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON

1. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON CONTINUES TENSE AND CONFUSING. LATEST REPORTS WE HAVE INDICATE HEAVY ARTILLERY AND MORTAR FIRING BY BOTH SIDES IS CONTINUING AND IT IS NO LONGER POSSIBLE TO TELL WHO IS STARTING THE FIRING AND WHO IS RESPONDING. DESPITE REPORT ON RADIO ISRAEL MORNING OF AUGUST 22 THAT PALESTINIANS HAD LAUNCHED A TANK ATTACK ON ALMA ASH SHAAB WE HAVE NO REPORTS OF ANY SIGNIFICANT GROUND ACTION SINCE PALESTINIANS' UNSUCCESSFUL PROBE FOWARDS DEIR AL MIMAS LATE LAST WEEK.

2. THE BATTLE LINE IN SOUTH LEBANON IS NOT A CONTINUOUS FRONT BUT A SERIES OF POCKETS RANGING FROM ALMA ASH SHAAB-NAQURA IN THE WEST, EAST TO SYN IBL-BINT JBAYL AND THEN NORTH TO QULAY'A-MARJAYUN-EL KHIAM. ACCORDING TO OUR INFORMATION, FATAH/PLO TROOPS ARE STILL UNDER ORDERS NOT TO INITIATE ARTILLERY FIRE BUT TO RESPOND WHEN FIRED UPON
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AND NOT TO UNDERTAKE GROUND ACTION. HOWEVER, VOLUME OF ARTILLERY FIRE DURING PAST FEW DAYS SUGGESTS THAT SOME REJECTIONIST UNITS, PARTICULARLY AROUND NABATIYAH, ARE ACTING INDEPENDENTLY. DATT SOURCES IN SOUTH REPORT THEY BELIEVE THAT REJECTIONISTS MAY NOW BE USING HEAVIER ARTILLERY/ROCKETS THAN HERETOFORE. RELIABLE DATT SOURCE IN TYRE REPORTS THAT THREE SHIPS ARRIVED IN

TYRE LAST WEEK CARRYING ARMS AND AMMUNITION FOR PLO/
FATAH FORCES.

3. COMMENT: DURING PAST FEW MONTHS, WE HAVE RECEIVED SEVERAL
REPORTS THAT ARMS AND AMMUNITION FOR PALESTINIANS IN THE
SOUTH HAVE BEEN ENTERING LEBANON
VIA TYRE. WE WONDER WHY ISRAELIS, WHO MUST BE AWARE OF
THIS TRAFFIC, HAVE APPARENTLY MADE NO EFFORTS TO STOP
IT, AS THEY WERE DOING A YEAR AGO.
PARKER

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Message Attributes

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